

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Documents from Environmental Organizations

Maine Environmental Collection

2011

Avian Haven Year End Report 2011

Avian Haven

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_env_organizations

Repository Citation

Haven, Avian, "Avian Haven Year End Report 2011" (2011). *Documents from Environmental Organizations*. 59.

https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_env_organizations/59

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Documents from Environmental Organizations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

AVIAN HAVEN

2011 Year End Report

"Nature calls the young woodpecker to the tree," according to a proverb. We have to agree: the impressive bills of these juvenile Pileated Woodpeckers are natural tools for sculpting trees as well as structures made of wood. For their stories and more, read on!

Rehabilitation 2011 Overview

2011 saw a slight decrease in overall admissions from the previous year; we cared for a total of 1325 birds (1300 new admissions, plus 25 held over from 2010), about a 6% drop from 2010's 1406, but still over the totals for any of the earlier years. The number of nestlings (642) was about the same as last year. The species count was 114. Among birds native to North America, the most frequent 2011 admissions were American Robin (147), Herring Gull (71), Mourning Dove (64), American Crow (58), Eastern Phoebe (50), Barred Owl (43), Blue Jay (43), Black-capped Chickadee (34), Cedar Waxwing (33), Song Sparrow (22), and Common Loon (22). The most commonly admitted raptor species after Barred Owl were Broad-winged Hawk (20), Osprey (18), Bald Eagle (15), and American Kestrel (12). Nonnative species

comprised 89 Rock Pigeons, 45 European Starlings, and 40 English Sparrows. Additionally, we admitted 40 injured reptiles, mostly car-hit Painted and Snapping Turtles.

Most of the high-count bird species are those that nest in close proximity to human dwellings, where nestlings in trouble are likely to be noticed. Exceptions to this general rule are Herring Gulls and Barred Owls, who are often injured by vehicles in areas where they are seeking food—either parking lots littered with food scraps, or roads where mice may be found at night. The long, slender wings of gulls are usually damaged irreparably by these encounters. Barred Owls are typically more fortunate; though their recovery time may be long, more than half recover from car impacts. The astonishing number of Barred Owls admitted in the last quarter of 2010 continued through the first quarter of 2011 and into the spring. That pattern did not repeat in 2011; only 3 individuals were admitted in the last few months of the year.

Continued on page 2

The two Pileated Woodpeckers shown above (female left, male right) were admitted in June as nestlings (from separate locations) and released in August, having done only minimal damage to the framing of their recovery habitat while enjoying the assortment of rotting logs placed inside for their amusement. 2011 was a big woodpecker year; combining all species, we admitted 55 in all. And June 24 was a big woodpecker day, with the arrival of 3 Northern Flicker and 5 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

orphans whose nest trees had been felled by a logger up around Lincoln. Area rehabilitator Evie Jordan worked with our volunteer transporters Kimb and John Spender; the birds were on their way to us in short order. Two days later, a 4th flicker from the same clutch was found, still in the felled tree and being tended by parents; but the loggers were taking the tree from the woods. The same rescue team reunited that youngster with his siblings. One of the original 3 had sustained a bad wrist fracture in the fall and had to be euthanized, but the broken leg of another healed well. The 3 flickers and all 5 sapsuckers were released on July 14. ■



Amanda Burns



However, the influx of loons (we had 2 Red-throated Loons in addition to the 22 Common Loons) in 2011 was unanticipated, challenging, and one of the inspirations for our proposed new facility for water birds.

Most of the nestlings we admitted had been found on the ground by people who did not know where the nest was located and who had not seen adults nearby. As long as nestlings are not hurt, emaciated or hypothermic, their stay with us is unremarkable, and most of them are released. Of injured adults for whom a cause of difficulty was reported, 109 were hit by cars, 51 were caught by cats, and 33 struck windows. The overall survival rates in these categories were 37%, 21%, and 42%, respectively. Among the less frequent causes of difficulty was unlawful shooting, which accounted for injuries to a dozen birds that included a Bald Eagle and three Common Loons. Discarded fishing line or other fishing gear injured an additional 4 loons as well as a Great Blue Heron (see story below) and a Barred Owl. Two owls, one Barred and one Great Horned, died as a result of secondary rodenticide poisoning.

The Flock

We are blessed with a remarkable group of helpers that include a small group of year-round on-site staff plus a larger collection of summer volunteers. In addition to Marc and Diane, folks who may be found here throughout the year are Glori Berry, Terry Heitz, Selkie O'Mira, Shelley Spanswick, and Jerry

Stefansky. As our clinic manager, Shelley does an awesome job, especially with wound management; her skills gave a wing back to a Peregrine Falcon, and other limbs to many other patients. Terry's design and building skills are evident everywhere in our physical plant. Amanda Burns, a recent graduate of Rochester Institute of Technology, was our outstanding summer intern. During the long, busy days of baby season, the camaraderie of our seasonal staff makes a whole that is truly greater than the sum of its parts in saving each other's sanity as well as caring for our avian guests. Kudos go to Kelani Cundy, Amy Dillon, Abby Everleth (who managed the infirmary on Shelley's days off), Linda Harrell, Lauren Jeschke, Laura Lecker, Connie Moore, Lydia Rocheleau, Kat Thompson, Nancy Tindall, and Janet Wiseley. As in past years, Kathy Kandziolka managed the grounds with her magic touch—but our physical plant is growing beyond the ability of one part-time person to care for all the vegetation. For 2012, we hope to recruit a small group of volunteer gardeners and landscapers—please let us know if you are interested!

For special contributions of various kinds, including money, goods, and services, we thank Jean Adamson, Scott Bergquist, Kathy Brownell, Bob Brummel, Rita Buckley, Amy & Bob Campbell, Lewis Cisle, Dale Doucette, Janika Eckert & Rob Johnston, Jim Fahey, Lloyd Ferriss & Jane Frost, Mark Finke, Mary Lou & Nelson Gamage, Luke Haber, Diane & Rob Jones, Dr. Judith Herman, Susan Smith Hudson, the family of Thomas Kandra, George Klueber, Vicki and Ken Kupferman, Don Lecker, Caron Leichtman, Norma McDonough, Bill & Eleanore Murley, William & Kyle Nichols, the family of Diane Ober, Mary Offutt, Nancy & Charlie Shuman, Tami & Ed Slowey, Kim Smith, Kathy & David Stager, Allen Stehle, Donna Wade, and many others either mentioned elsewhere in this report or noted on our website.

Continued on page 5

Wdn. Steve Allarie called on the afternoon of Oct. 24 to give us a heads-up that he was about to attempt a rescue of a Great Blue Heron tangled in fishing line near the north end of Cobboseecontee Lake. Responding to a call, Steve had found her standing up, half in and half out of the water, with a significant length of monofilament wrapped around the left wing and leg, and some tissue damage to the wing. Steve made a quick detour to grab a large kennel, and returned to the site with Wdn. Dan Christianson. Together they were able to free the bird, and Steve called back to say the heron was still alive, though barely.

Steve met volunteer Linda Harrell in Augusta, and she got the heron here in record time. The bird was wet, cold, and virtually comatose on intake; the abrasions on the wing were the least of her problems. We popped her in a heated ICU to dry off and warm up, not really expecting her to live the night. But live she did, and the next morning, in a larger indoor habitat, she



tried to stand. Standing wasn't easy, and walking even more challenging; the bird was extremely unsteady on her feet. But her balance problems resolved over the next week, and on Nov. 3, she was flying and restless. "Knee deep in hunting and trapping issues," Steve was not able to join us for a release, but wished her well. Great Blue Herons were migrating, so there was no need for her to return to Cobbosee'; Marc set her free at a Sebasticook Regional Land Trust (www.sebasticookrlt.org) wetland in Unity. ■



As stated earlier, we saw an unusually large number of Common Loons in 2011. In addition to the causes of difficulty already noted, 6 of the birds had fungal infections of their respiratory tracts, a condition that seems to be on the increase in the Northeast and that may be related to climate changes. Another case that was particularly troubling was a juvenile with a large tumor on his throat. Our veterinarian, Dr. Judy Herman, removed the mass, but it was a squamous cell carcinoma that regrew quickly. Consultations with wildlife veterinarians and veterinary oncologists at Tufts revealed no treatments likely to succeed; this poor youngster had to be euthanized. But to find this condition in a juvenile was surprising to say the least; hopefully something can be learned from the extensive post-mortem testing.

We've already mentioned that several loons had ingested fishing gear and several had been shot. One had both problems. Our friend and colleague, Kappy Sprenger of Bridgton, transferred a Common Loon to us on Dec.

14. Two days earlier, the bird had been beached at nearby Long Lake. Ordinarily, Kappy, a loon specialist, would have seen the bird through the rehab process, but she was recovering from shoulder surgery and was not yet able to handle a bird as heavy as a Common Loon. We already knew from the x-ray her vet had taken that the bird had a bullet (and a couple small fragments) in her chest, plus three fish hook pieces in her gizzard. She was thin, seemed to have a little trouble breathing, and basic blood work results indicated a debilitated state. She also had a low-moderate blood lead level. Dr. Mark Pokras at Tufts was asked to consult, and after looking at the x-ray, he was concerned that the bullet might have punctured a lung. We could not find an entrance wound, so had no way of knowing how long the bird had lived with the extra hardware. Further, it appeared to Dr. Pokras that two of the hook pieces were no longer in the gizzard cavity, but were perhaps

embedded in the muscular wall of that organ, or possibly had migrated into the body cavity. If so, it was possible that they had been walled off, and assuming they had not punctured a bowel loop or kidney, the loon might live with them. On his advice, we started the bird on antibiotics.

Over the remainder of the month, the loon's condition gradually improved. Blood parameters rebounded to normal levels and she gained weight. A few times, we saw her swimming underwater as if looking for fish, so on the 30th, we gave her a dozen live minnows graciously provided by Dale Doucette (Albion Bait Fish). She nailed them all! Everyone involved in the case agreed that the bird had potential for release, but there were a few lingering concerns. One was an occasional loss of appetite and tendency to vomit. These episodes were usually short-lasting, but could reflect a lingering GI tract irritation. The second was the continuing blood lead level. There was no sign of lead in the GI tract, but if a fragment from the bullet was in bone marrow, lead could leach systemically from there, and perhaps produce chronic digestive or neurologic difficulties. The third was her exceptionally calm demeanor; she was not at all restless or even particularly active—as if not feeling well. The fourth consideration was the time of year. Did we want to release a bird with her liabilities heading into the coldest time of the year? No, but a long stay in captivity carried risks of other kinds. Thanks to a heavy-duty pond heater, we were able to keep an outdoor pool going, and by the end of the month, she was staying in water from dawn until early evening. Listening to the baby monitor set up near her pool, around 7 p.m. we would hear her attempt to get out of the water, at which point we would bring her in for the night.

Early in the new year, we opted to continue longer with supportive care, and try to get her lead level down closer to zero with chelation therapy. As this report goes to press, she is still with us, and we continue to wait and see. ■



Special Thanks...

Businesses and Organizations

Aerie East
All Creatures Veterinary Hospital
Animal Wellness Center
Belfast Cooperative
Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery
Damariscotta Veterinary Clinic
Ellsworth Builders Supply
Fosters Family Pet Store
Little River Veterinary Hospital
Maine Coastal Islands National
Wildlife Refuges
Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries &
Wildlife
Maine Dept. of Marine Resources
Maine Fish Health Laboratory
Maine General Hospital
Maine Warden Service
Maine Wildlife Park
Mid-Coast Audubon Society
NextEra Energy
PenBay Veterinary Associates
Petco (Augusta)
Pet Life (Kennel Shop)
The Raptor Trust
Sand Hill Strawberry Farm
U.S.D.A. APHIS Wildlife Services
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Village Farm
Walmart (Augusta)
Wind Over Wings

Wildlife Colleagues

Brad Allen
Judy Camuso
Keith Crowley
Russ Danner
Philip deMaynadier
Robin Dyer
Lynne Flaccus
Nate Gray
Bill Hanson
Anna Hunt
Eric Holmes
Keel Kemper
Jen Lewis
Chris Martinez
Jonathan Mays
Mark McCollough
Erica Miller
Kristin Peet
Mark Pokras
Inga Sidor
Kappy Sprenger
Mark Stadler
Kelsey Sullivan
Graham Taylor
Charlie Todd
Flo Tseng
Linda Welch

It was late January when we got a call from the Bath Brunswick Veterinary Hospital about a duck reported to have been taken by a hawk, then dropped into traffic and hit by a car. Volunteer transporters Lloyd Ferriss and Jane Frost got the bird here within a few hours. The duck was a juvenile male Hooded Merganser with a lacerated wing and some missing breast feathers. We let him settle in without getting too aggressive with the wound; next day, under anesthesia, we took an x-ray and carefully cleaned the laceration. No bones were broken, and it looked like the wound would close up without suturing. But over the next few days, the bird refused all food offerings, even live goldfish. We tube fed him fish slurry, and continued to make food available. Finally on Feb. 5, he went for jumbo krill, and for the rest of the month, it was his favorite food. His other problem, a loss of waterproofing, was related to the missing feathers. As the feathers grew in and time spent in water increased, his food preference shifted to small fish.



the Spring's first hoodies at a marsh just west of Field's Pond (Orrington). The following day, we packed both birds, and Diane drove north, picking up another birder, our friend George Klueber, en route in Searsport. George, Diane and the mergs continued up to Stockton, where William and his brother Kyle were collected. The plan was to release the RB, then head to Orrington to meet Jerry and release the hoodie. Our foursome searched several coastal spots in that area with binoculars and a spotting scope, but could find no RBs in well over an hour of searching. Meanwhile, despite a promising forecast, the weather had deteriorated considerably, so the release plan was scrapped, and Diane brought the birds back. Naturally, the next day, William saw RBs again, but weather conditions remained unfavorable into the following day, when a small craft advisory was posted. The release plan was replayed on the 15th. Again, Diane, George and the Nichols brothers began by searching several

Meanwhile, on Feb. 19, we had gotten an adult male Red-

breasted Merganser from the Damariscotta Veterinary Clinic. We concurred with Dr. Welch's assessment that there were no injuries. The bird was thin, but unlike the hoodie, was an eager eater from the get-go. By early March, the two mergansers were housed together in a habitat with an in-ground pool, in which they spent most of their time.

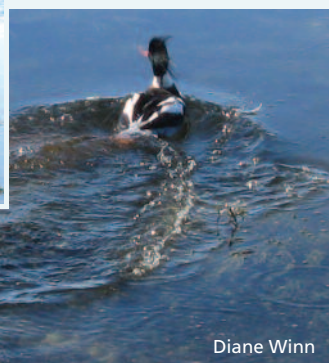


Within another week, we thought they were both ready to go.

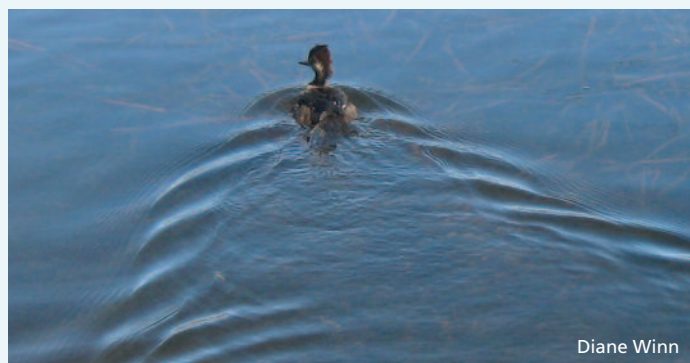
Red-breasted Mergansers winter along the entire east coast and are late migrants, with movement toward the breeding grounds (mostly north of the United States) primarily in April. Hoodies on the other hand are early migrants, and may arrive on their freshwater breeding grounds almost as soon as the ice is out. After consulting with waterfowl biologist Kelsey Sullivan, we contacted birders likely to have spotted both species. On March 11, William Nichols saw a large group of RBs in Stockton Springs, and Jerry Smith saw

coastal sites for RBs, and this time saw a few birds, but cold weather overnight had left an ice skim at least 50 feet out from each area. After three no-go stops, we decided to try the Sears Island causeway. Seth Benz's "Bird Bus" was there, and as we pulled up, our spirits were buoyed by the number of birders with binoculars looking out toward open water. When we explained our mission, they confirmed immediately that there was at least one RB out there, and showed us where. Members of the release party climbed down the rocks to the water, and were happy to find just a few feet of slush on the shoreline. Our bird swam slowly through the slush, then easily in open water. We saw him dive and resurface, and eventually join the other RB—accompanied by cheers from the onlookers.

Despite how much time had been spent looking for RBs, there was still plenty of time to get to Orrington with the hoodie. Jerry had counted 16 there early that morning, and when we arrived at the marsh around noon, a pair was seen about 100 yards off. Our boy made his way through the slush, then swam toward the pair, diving and resurfacing en route. As he got closer, they swam toward him. The male made a bit of a display, but then settled down, and they all seemed to settle in together. Our last sight was of our boy close to the female, with the older male somewhat off to the side. ■



Diane Winn



Diane Winn



On July 3, Wdn. Alan Dudley received an anonymous tip about a lady who was keeping an owl at her residence in Presque Isle. After determining her address, he went to her home, and when he explained why he was there, the woman said she would go upstairs and get the bird. Alan was expecting something at least the size of a Barred Owl, so was surprised when his offer of help was declined. But the woman came down with a very small bird—a juvenile Saw-Whet Owl—perched on her finger. The owl and his captor accompanied the warden to the police station; Alan was going to be busy with the woman, so he quickly made arrangements for the owl to go temporarily to our friend Bill Sheehan, a well-known Aroostook County birder. It was a couple days before a ride south could be arranged; as luck had it, a pair of equally awesome birders, Derek and Jeanette Lovitch, had been in Bill's company, and they were headed south on the 5th. They met up with volunteer transporter Laura Teisl in Bangor, and after meeting another warden to collect an injured loon, Laura headed our way.

The fledgling had mild neurologic signs, some irritation on the skin around the eyes and mouth, and a heavy parasite load. With treatment, these difficulties gradually resolved. About two weeks after admission, he still was not flying well, but his stamina increased over another month of exercise. This picture was taken just a few days before his release on Aug. 24.

Why would anyone want to kidnap an owl? We never learned more about this bird's abductor, but were reminded of his story in December, when a Screech Owl was stolen from her habitat at The Raptor Trust, in NJ (www.theraptortrust.org). A media blitz quickly followed the theft, and in its wake, an anonymous person who knew the bird's location brought her back home. Companion owls have been popularized by the Harry Potter series; perhaps these stories inspired "wannabes." But reality in the United States does not match fiction; possession of most wild birds is illegal, and can result in both fines and jail terms. ■



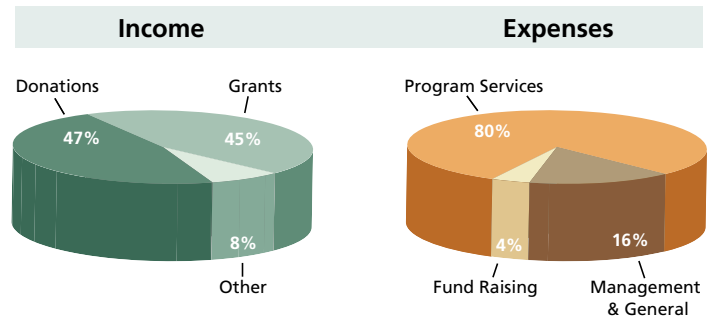
In the Spring of 2011, we received a Merit Award from the Maine Warden Service; it was a great honor, and we are proud of our close working relationships with some of the State's finest. We value equally our partnership with Maine's DIFW Biologists, many of whom helped with rescues as well as gave counsel and support. Wildlife veterinarians, rehabilitators, and biologists with other agencies also rank among our esteemed associates; some of them, as well as businesses and organizations that were especially helpful in 2011 are listed in the sidebars on page 3.

Avian Haven admits birds from a huge portion of the state. We could not function without the assistance of a large number of volunteers who help transport birds here when people who find injured individuals are unable or unwilling to drive with them. Space considerations prevent us from thanking them all in this document, but a complete list of our wonderful "avian ambulance drivers" can be found on our website.

Nest Eggs

In 2011, our income was nearly equally divided between individual/business donations, and foundation/trust grants (see chart in next column). We are especially grateful for a generous grant for our endowment from a private foundation that wished to remain anonymous. Other greatly appreciated grants were received from The American Foundation, The Roy Foundation, Maine Community Foundation (Aquila Fund), and Baker Street Trust.

About 25% of our spending in 2011 comprised capital expenditures—primarily the intern cabin. Operations costs can be categorized as Program Services (food, veterinary supplies, services, payroll, small equipment, travel, phone, etc.), Management & General (insurance, accounting, business supplies, etc.), and Fund Raising. The proportions in each category are shown in the second chart in next column.



The Roost

The intern cabin we told you about last year was ready for occupancy less than an hour before Amanda arrived for the season! She gave her summer home rave reviews, and we look forward to having it available for our 2012 interns. The Maine Community Foundation grant funded pools in each of the three habitat areas that typically house Bald Eagles; they were used with enthusiasm not only by that species but also by a group of young Ospreys who moved into one of the habitats for part of the summer.

Our website continued in 2011 to host slide shows featuring some of our favorite cases. We have not duplicated their stories in this document, and invite readers to find them at www.avianhaven.org/cases.

One of our most memorable success stories was that of a banded Peregrine Falcon, named "Feisty" by folks who had watched him grow up on BioDiversity Research Institute's (www.briloon.org) peregrinecam. He got an entire slide show all to himself, and if you haven't already watched it, previous viewers advise a hanky at the ready.





Bill Hanson

On Aug. 5, staff from BioDiversity Research Institute contacted us regarding a Bald Eagle chick from a nest near the Bosebuck Mountain Camps (www.bosebuck.com) on Aziscohos Lake. The youngster had left the nest prematurely and had been on the ground for several

days. At first, the nestling had been tended by her parents, with the older sibling remaining nearby. But people camping on the opposite shore had seen the younger bird on the ground and approached in kayaks, remaining close by to “keep watch” over her. The Bosebuck Camps owner, Wendy Yates, was unable to convince these folks that their “vigil” was serving only to drive away the parents; the campers insisted that they were “helping.” As a result, the adult birds spent less and less time tending the youngster. When Wendy discovered the nestling too weak to stand, she contacted the BRI folks and our mutual friend, Bill Hanson (wildlife biologist with NextEra Energy) for assistance. Bill knew the nest well, for earlier in the season, he had banded the bird of current concern as well as her older sibling (who also was outfitted with a satellite unit); see photo above. We also knew the nest well, for after its collapse in 2010, we had admitted its fallen occupant. A few days later, Bill

and Maine’s eagle biologist, Charlie Todd, repaired the nest and replaced the fallen chick.

One of our volunteer transporters, Anne Bourassa, met the BRI folks, and brought the 2011 eaglet here. On admission, she was uninjured, but emaciated and debilitated. Diligent supportive care was successful; about two weeks later, the bird’s blood work had rebounded, and her initial weight of only 2.4 kg had increased to 4.1 kg. Bill and Charlie took the youngster back to

Aziscohos on Aug. 18, and did some more refurbishing before returning the bird to the nest. The sibling and both parents were within visual range. Two days later, Wendy e-mailed to report that our eagle had left the nest; she saw an adult bring a fish to the youngster, and saw her bathing in the lake. On Aug. 23, the bird took flight. Wendy last saw the juveniles in late September. Both seemed to be holding their own and had maintained an increasingly loose association with the parents. Where the younger bird went from Aziscohos is unknown, but the sibling with the transmitter went south for the winter, and since mid December, has been in the Norwich, CT area. ■



Bill Hanson

Another eaglet was recovered by Wdn. Shannon Fish on the ground in the Eddington area, having been reported by a couple canoeing on the Penobscot River. Shannon could see the nest 50-60 feet up in a nearby tree, but no adult birds were nearby. It was agreed that the bird should come in for a check-up, and Shannon handed the bird off to volunteer transporter Laura Teisl for the trip here. Luckily, there were no broken bones, but the bird was not able to stand up. He recovered with time, though, and because his parents could not be located, he grew up here, in the company of our resident foster bird and an older juvenile recovering from injuries. He was released in October on property in Augusta overlooking the Kennebec owned by volunteer Linda Harrell; after some strong soaring and circling, he was last seen flying downriver. ■



Terry Heitz

On April 29, two adult Bald Eagles in aerial combat fell to the ground still locked together, both faces bloody from biting one another. They landed in a small stream not far from the Bangor Auditorium, and two golfers pulled them from the water (one later remarked to us that it was the only “double eagle” he would likely ever have!).



Wdn. Rick Ouellette was soon at the scene, and shortly thereafter was joined by Charlie Todd. Together, they were able to unlock the birds, Charlie using a key to pry one bird’s talons from the other bird’s leg. Charlie then brought both birds down.

The smaller of the two birds was the one who’d been on the bottom when the birds hit the ground. We could find no puncture wounds, but knew there would be internal injuries. Despite supportive care, his condition deteriorated, and he died a few days later. The larger bird did have multiple puncture wounds. Some aggressive wound management and antibiotic therapy resulted in successful healing, and he was released on June 15. This bird was banded, and from the band numbers, could be traced to a nest along the Penobscot

River in Enfield, where he had hatched six years earlier.

In the 1960s, there were fewer than 50 pairs of nesting Bald Eagles; today there are more than 600. The species has made a remarkable recovery, thanks to widespread efforts on many fronts. However, one of the remaining concerns is the statewide carrying capacity for nesting eagles. Availability of food and nesting habitat may set some limits; eagles in combat reflect territorial disputes that may become more frequent as their population continues to grow. However, continuing efforts to boost food resources and limit development sprawl will in turn increase the limits on future eagle populations. ■



When Don Reimer called us on Nov. 25 to say that an Ash-throated Flycatcher would soon be headed our way, we were startled, to say the least. This Southwestern species has rarely been seen in our neck of the woods, and if it had been almost anyone else but Don, we would not have believed it. But Don is an expert birder, and his ID was correct. The flycatcher had been seen around a barn in Northport on Thanksgiving Day, and toward evening, she flew into the barn; after a collision with one of the windows, she was easily retrieved. When she arrived here, we found her thin, but uninjured. But what was she doing in mid-coast Maine? A little research revealed that this species is prone to wander outside its normal range, even to places as far distant as the Northeast from early November to mid December. As documented by sightings posted on eBird (www.ebird.org), 2011 appearances in the Northeast were unusually frequent and began unusually early, in late September. The author of an Oct. 27 essay on eBird speculated that these birds were fleeing the Southwestern drought.

Although the weather in Maine was mild in the week following the bird's arrival, we judged her too thin to survive migration toward the wintering grounds along the Gulf of Mexico coast and farther south. And when the weather turned seasonably cold shortly thereafter, we couldn't imagine her surviving even if released in southern New England. But holding her through the winter didn't make sense either; so we started thinking outside our geographical box. Diane ran the situation



by Linda Hufford, a TX colleague she'd corresponded with over the years. Very soon they hatched a plan to fly the bird via Delta cargo to Austin. Diane's brother (and Avian Haven's webmaster) James Skowbo would fetch the bird from the airport and drive her to Austin-area rehabilitator, Ed Sones, who would subsequently release the bird. We wanted to get her on her way as soon as feasible, and began the paperwork process on Dec. 8. It was necessary to get permission from TX Parks and Wildlife, as well as the USFWS agencies in both districts. All personnel were extremely helpful, and found ways to expedite the permits by the next day, which was also the end of the work week! Marc immediately made reservations for the following Monday, Dec. 12, and set about preparing a travel crate that met Delta's specifications for live cargo.

The bird had to be at the Portland Jetport (an hour and a half away) at 5 a.m., so Marc drove down with her the night before, spending the night in a nearby motel. After her plane left at 7:15, we tracked the flights—first to Atlanta, and then on to Austin, where she landed around 4 p.m. local time. James had the bird to Ed by 6, and Ed e-mailed within the hour to let us know she was fine. After a few days of acclimation and a bit more weight gain, the bird was ready to go. Ed had decided to drive the bird south to the Gulf Coast, and followed advice from Audubon Society friends regarding prime locations near Victoria, TX. Dec. 18 was the big day. That afternoon, Ed e-mailed a description of her immediate, strong flight to the top of the largest nearby tree, and from there off toward the west. ■

Another interesting thing on our homepage (and at the close of this report) is a new logo designed by Shearon Murphy: zoom in and look carefully at the images in the wings! In addition to Shearon, we thank our webmaster, James Skowbo, for our home on the Web, as well as his help with the bird whose story is told above.

The "Water Birds" slide show provides the background for our project for next year—a small building to house pools that can be used year round. Featured on the back cover of this report, the planned structure has already been dubbed "The Pool Hall" by its designer and builder, Terry Heitz. As noted in the story of December's Common Loon (page 3), we have been able to maintain an outdoor winter pool, but look forward to having an easier time of it next year. By the close of 2011, we had already raised nearly half the cost of the project, and are now actively pursuing funding for the remaining half. While we apply for foundation grants, readers like you can help close that gap with designated contributions.

In Closing . . .

The Common Loon is also known by other names that seem more apt: the Great Northern Loon, and Great Northern Diver. For most people, they are a beloved and charismatic presence on summer lakes; folks who saw the x-rays of the three shot birds we had this year never failed to ask, in dismay, "What kind of person would shoot a Loon?" We do not know the history of the individuals we admitted this year, but Wardens have told us of other instances in which the shooter was a fisherman angry at a perceived competitor. Acid rain, mercury contamination and lead poisoning

are much more widespread threats to the species; yet hope remains if mercury and acid-causing pollutants can be reduced, and non-lead fishing gear more widely used. Perhaps inspiration for action can be found in the image evoked by Rev. M. B. Townsend's 1919 description of birds at dawn, which we first read in Tom Klein's *Loon Magic*: "A beautiful sight was that of three loons facing the rising sun, standing almost erect on the water, their great wings vigorously flapping, the sun shining full upon their pure white breasts. It seemed almost like an act of religious devotion in honor of old Phoebus." May such devotion forever grace Maine's lakes.

Until next year—

Diane & Marc

Diane Winn and Marc Payne, Co-Directors

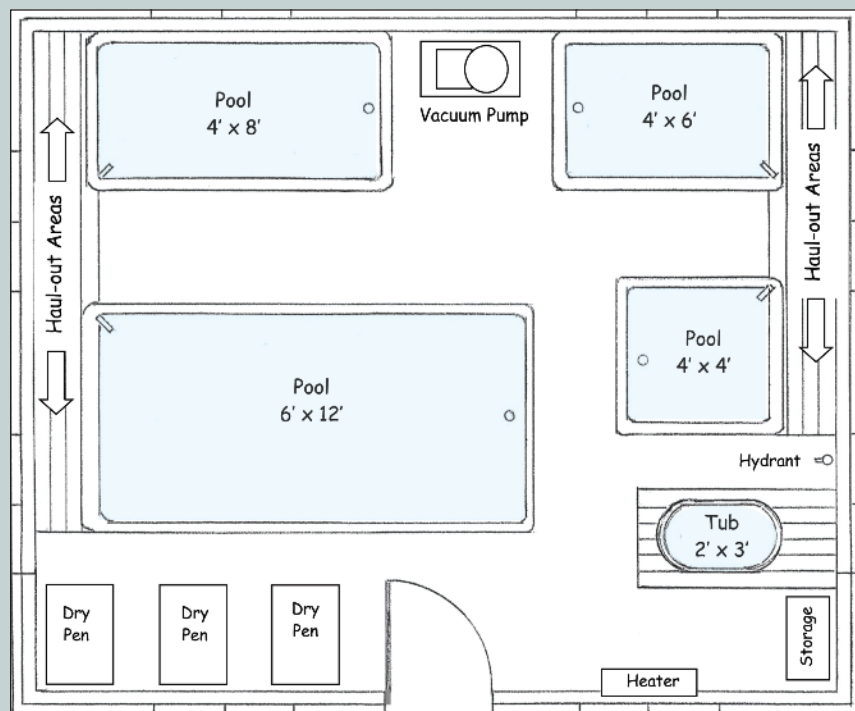


AVIAN HAVEN is a nonprofit wild bird rehabilitation center dedicated to the return of injured and orphaned birds of all species to their natural roles in the wild. Your tax-deductible contributions enable the success of this mission. Credit card and PayPal donations may be made through our website, www.avianhaven.org, or checks may be sent to 418 N. Palermo Rd., Freedom, ME 04941. Printed receipts are gladly provided upon request. We can be reached by phone at **207-382-6761** or by e-mail at info@avianhaven.org.

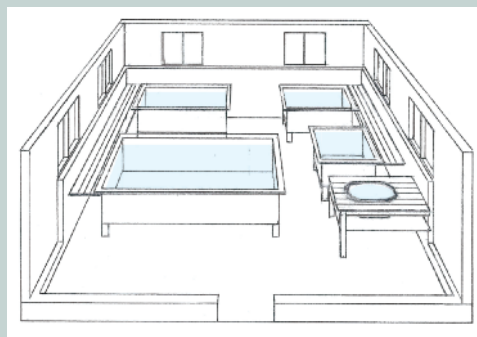
Thank you for your support!

All photography is by Glori Berry unless otherwise credited.

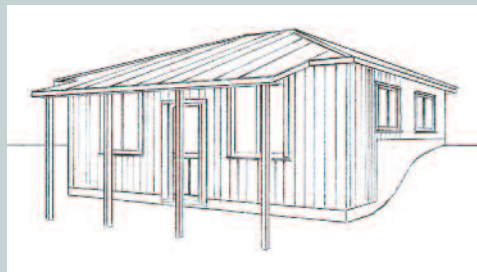
Layout for Proposed Aquatic Bird Facility at Avian Haven



Cut-away View of Pools



Perspective Exterior View



Drawings by Terry Heitz

To help us reduce our use of forest resources, let us know by e-mail info@avianhaven.org if we may send future issues of this report to you electronically. Folks on our e-mailing list also receive notices of newly posted slide shows.



418 N. Palermo Road • Freedom, ME 04941